

first and second ink bags each comprising a bag main body storing ink and an outlet through which the ink can be discharged from the bag main body, the first and second ink bags being housed by the first case and the second case,

wherein when the first case and the second case are joined, the outlets of the first and second ink bags are pressed directly against each other by the first case and the second case.

40. (Thrice Amended) An ink cartridge comprising:

a plurality of ink cartridges including a first ink cartridge for housing a first ink bag storing first ink, and a second ink cartridge for housing a second ink bag storing second ink of a different color than the first ink, each of the first and second ink bags having an outlet through which the ink can be discharged, the ink cartridges being detachably joined by a joint mechanism, wherein the joint mechanism comprises at least one insertion projection engageable with a corresponding at least one insertion hole, and wherein when the ink cartridges are joined, the outlets of the first and second ink bags are pressed directly against each other.

#### REMARKS

Claims 22-34 and 36-42 are present in this application. By this Amendment, claims 22 and 40 have been amended. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 because the Amendment: (a) places the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) does not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or

consideration (since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution and raised by the Examiner in the previous Office Action; (c) does not present any additional claims without canceling the corresponding number of finally-rejected claims; and (d) places the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The Amendment was necessary and was not earlier presented because it is made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the Amendment is thus respectfully requested.

Claims 22-25, 27-30, 32-35 and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,106,112 to Okubo et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

This rejection is generally maintained from the previous Office Action dated September 25, 2002. In the "Response to Arguments" section in paragraph 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner acknowledges that the ink feed ports in Okubo are not directly pressed against each other. Rather, the Examiner recognizes that "[t]he pressing forces between the ink feed ports (23l, 23u) are exerted through the projection (14)." In an effort to clarify this distinction along the lines suggested by the Examiner, claim 22 has been amended to recite that when the first case and the second case are joined, the outlets of the first and second ink bags are pressed directly against each other by the first case and the second case. Similarly, claim 40 has been amended to recite that when the ink cartridges are joined, the outlets of the first and second ink bags are pressed directly against each other.

With reference to the Remarks section of the Amendment filed December 23, 2002, which Remarks are hereby incorporated by reference, the respective ink feed ports

23L and 23U are not pressed directly against each other as claimed. Rather, as recognized by the Examiner, the upper ink feed port 23U engages the engagement projection 14. Applicants thus respectfully submit that the rejection is misplaced.

With respect to the dependent claims, without conceding the Office Action's contentions, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on an allowable independent claim. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 26, 31 and 36-39 and the indication of allowability of claims 41 and 42.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are patentable over the art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Prompt passage to issuance is earnestly solicited.

NAKAZAWA et al.  
Serial No. 09/771,942

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached pages are captioned "**Version With Markings To Show Changes Made.**"

Respectfully submitted,

**NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.**

By: Alan M. Kagen  
Alan M. Kagen  
Reg. No. 36,178

AMK:jl  
1100 North Glebe Road, 8th Floor  
Arlington, VA 22201-4714  
Telephone: (703) 816-4000  
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100

**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**

**IN THE CLAIMS**

22. (Amended) An ink cartridge comprising:

a cartridge main body having a first case and a second case joined to the first case;

and

first and second ink bags each comprising a bag main body storing ink and an outlet through which the ink can be discharged from the bag main body, the first and second ink bags being housed by the first case and the second case,

wherein when the first case and the second case are joined, the outlets of the first and second ink bags are pressed directly against each other by the first case and the second case.

40. (Thrice Amended) An ink cartridge comprising:

a plurality of ink cartridges including a first ink cartridge for housing a first ink bag storing first ink, and a second ink cartridge for housing a second ink bag storing second ink of a different color than the first ink, each of the first and second ink bags having an outlet through which the ink can be discharged, the ink cartridges being detachably joined by a joint mechanism, wherein the joint mechanism comprises at least one insertion projection engageable with a corresponding at least one insertion hole, and wherein when the ink cartridges are joined, the outlets of the first and second ink bags are pressed directly against each other.